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## CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

### "I KNOW MY LOUVRE"

*Reprinted from the Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design.*

In Sensier's book on Jean Francois Millet, we find the painter exclaiming with a feeling of pride, "I know my Louvre." It was not the physical building, with its important historical associations, which he knew so intimately, but rather its contents, that vast accumulation of the world's treasures of art of the best periods. Even more than the paintings and sculpture themselves, the Louvre meant to Millet, not the history of art, but the inspiration and vision which these works of art afforded. He did not come to this knowledge with a single visit, but his biographers repeatedly dwell upon the fact that, during the period of his Paris residence, he haunted the galleries, for, as he says, "The Louvre bewitched me." One may say that, as an artist, he was unusually sensitive to the message of art; but quite apart from this, he made a conscious effort to broaden his acquaintance with worth-while art, and was abundantly rewarded.

There is in his experience something for each of us, whether we are artists or not. We may not have the Louvre within daily reach, but we do have a Museum that seeks to bring to us the best that is obtainable. Most American museums are not, as they have sometimes been called, "cold-storage warehouses of works of art," but functioning collections, emphasizing quality in art, and giving their message to those who care to hear. One visit will not reveal the possibilities, but only a constant acquaintance with objects on exhibition. We need art in our development as much as we do religion, or literature, or music; and the world becomes much richer, and our comprehension of its beauties much enhanced when we develop our powers of appreciation.

Do you know your Museum of Art to any such degree as Millet? Have you made it so much a part of your life that it remains a constant source of joy and inspiration? If not, you have missed something worth-while. Artists are gifted people who are super-sensitive to beauty in Nature, either literal or abstract. Why not give them as much of a chance as the poet, the musician, and the clergyman? Do not think that it does not matter or does not enrich one's life. Quite apart from the inner awakening of the soul to the sense of beauty, art influences our whole life. The clothes we wear, the way we dress, the surroundings in our homes, even our attitude towards our business is influenced by the degree of our acquaintance with art. We speak of a person's having good taste when we mean a superior understanding of the refinements of art. Not all artists are great, and the degree of their success depends on their inner vision, rather than on their technique.

The place where this is to be seen by the public at large is the art museum. Here, at leisure, you, as an interested visitor, like Millet, may find the larger art consciousness stirred, your eyes opened, and your outlook on life broadened precisely to the degree that you allow it. The collections are not static, but constantly changing and growing. For this reason, if for no other, you ought to make frequent visits to the museum.

Please note the possessive pronoun in Millet's phrase. It is the real expressive word in the whole. Millet knew that the Louvre belonged to him in two senses. In the first place, as a French citizen, he actually was a part-

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owner, though in a very small degree, of the physical building and its contents. But we have noted the much broader way in which he had made the Louvre his own.

How can we do it? By visiting our Museum constantly, seeing its special and permanent collections, attending its receptions, taking advantage of its lectures and Sunday afternoon talks, and by taking the same pride in its growth and success that we do in our home or business. In some cities, the art museum is recognized as one of its great assets, and no visitor is allowed to leave without being shown it. Do we do this? If we did, we would soon come to know our museum. Have the pleasure of having a share in its growth, and make the message of the things it has, a part of our life, looking forward to the larger museum of the future, and the more important message it can then give. Remember our art museum is an indication to the world of our civic pride and our understanding of the beautiful. Therefore, let us say, with Millet, "I know my museum."

## DUVENECK'S THE VENETIAN GIRL

Mrs. Henry A. Everett has presented to the Museum as a memorial to her daughter, Dorothy Burnham Everett, the remarkable painting by Frank Duveneck called *The Venetian Girl* which is reproduced in this issue.

It would be difficult to imagine a more appropriate memorial to an Ohio girl than this charming representation of a beautiful young woman painted by one of Ohio's greatest artists. This canvas will be a constant delight to future generations whose gratitude will go out to the donor who has added this to the Museum's other important treasures.

Frank Duveneck was born in Covington, Kentucky, in 1848, but his name is so associated with Cincinnati that it is hard to think of him as anything but an Ohio artist. His years of study in Munich, and his painting there and in Venice and elsewhere, all seemed but preparation for his return to take up his work at the Art Academy in Cincinnati, with which he was associated from 1900 until his death in 1919.

If Duveneck is not widely known in America, it is because he did not exhibit often here and in his earlier years was more concerned with painting than with selling; and also because since 1887 he was more a teacher than a painter.

It was perhaps his independence and simplicity which produced the unusual sincerity and straightforwardness which is so evident in his work. It is said that he periodically went through his canvases and destroyed what he felt was unworthy.